

## Patrol Squadron FOUR Takes Heart And Helps The People Of Acireale

By: LTJG Miyuki Kauffroath

On Tuesday, February 5, 2013, the “Skinny Dragons” of Patrol Squadron FOUR ventured into the heart of Acireale to help those in need by volunteering at Chiesa di San Camillo, Mensa dei Poveri, local food kitchen. CDR Brent Strong, CMC Gary Smedley, Chief Edward Hopper, LTJG Miyuki Kauffroath, IT2 Cassandra Pinter, and MCSA Devin Mendhardt spent the afternoon with local community volunteers providing food and assistance to the homeless. “Being members of the service, we have most of our needs met on a daily basis. We are never left wanting a warm meal or a nice bed; experiences like these open our eyes to how hard some people struggle. It is important for us to not only realize this is happening, but provide services that will aid these individuals in any way we can,” said CDR Brent Strong, Commanding Officer of Patrol Squadron FOUR.



**VP-4 volunteers break down a fence in the courtyard.**

The food kitchen provides meals, showers, clean clothes, and other commodities to those less fortunate. Upon their arrival, the “Skinny Dragons” were immediately put to work sweeping, mopping and cleaning the courtyard. CMC Gary Smedley was overjoyed to get his hands dirty, “It feels good to give back to a community that treats us like family while we are deployed.”

Once the food had been prepared, the volunteers then served those in attendance. Vera Presti, a regular volunteer, expressed her excitement to receive help from the military members stationed here, “I enjoyed

working with everyone today. They were very organized, active, and helpful. Their time is very valuable and we appreciate that.”

“Today’s visit was productive; we made a difference. Even better, we can continue to make a difference by improving every time,” said Chief Edward Hopper. Patrol Squadron FOUR plans on making a weekly appearance at the food kitchen throughout this deployment and the list of service members ready to volunteer is motivating. “Approximately 100 “Skinny Dragons” will get the opportunity to contribute to the city of Acireale, and by the end of deployment the squadron will have volunteered over 400 hours! VP-4 is making a difference!” expressed LCDR Ryan Davis.



**Chief Hopper lends a helping hand and a hot plate of food.**